

Original Story From The Baltimore Sun: April 22nd

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1995-04-22-1995112004-story.html>

*This story was leaked to the press, and likely wasn't meant to be discussed.
Claimed to be from an inside source who worked on the operation.*

Key points

- Claimed disney only received a letter.
- Claimed 2 men were apprehended, 3 days before Easter (Later article states 1 week)
- Had written instructions pertaining to sarin.
- Claimed the cult members had a video tape. (At the airport)
- Claimed the plot was foiled
- 1 person was allowed to continue onto new york (was later followed)
- Tape contained a calendar with dates april 14th, 15th, 16th with 9pm circled.
- 1 man was claimed to have been detained in Los Angeles.

Follow up story from Baltimore Sun: April 23rd

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1995-04-23-1995113002-story.html>

Key Points:

- Doj spokesman claims that the reason for the federal response was out of caution, not because of the men questioned at LAX.
- Members of the strike force claimed that it was in response to the men at LAX.
- Japanese Ministry Spokesman claimed that they had printed material related to sarin, but were seeking info on pesticides(???) and US authorities let them go.
- The DOJ Spokesman denied any men were questioned.
- Strike force members mention the men arrived to LAX "The week before easter"
- Tokyo police told japanese news organizations that two japanese men were questioned.

- Response team decided to stay 5 days from the 13th-18th.
- The DOJ Spokesman claimed a threat was received but did not clarify what type.
- Disney Spokesman claimed they received the threat on the 13th, but claimed to not know what form it was in. (He later doubles back on this)

Los Angeles Times.

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-04-23-me-57914-story.html>

(behind paywall, newspaper clippings below)

Follow up article that came out on the 23rd that refutes the Baltimore sun's report.

- Claimed no evidence that the Japanese cult planned an attack at the park.
- Disneyland spokesman claimed that they received a letter and a videotape (Despite earlier stating he didn't know?)
- The Baltimore Sun's Newspaper chief stood by their original report.
- Claimed tape contained a man mixing chemicals.
- DOJ spokesman claims that Baltimore sun's report was not accurate
- President Clinton claims that the multi-agency reaction was an example of the government's ability to counter terrorist threats that the public doesn't see.
- A DOJ spokesman claims that it may be perpetrated by a former Disney employee?
(*I thought you weren't allowed to discuss evidence???*)
- Claims letter and videotape were sent to Disneyland office.

Disneyland Nerve Gas Threat Called a Hoax

■ **Probe:** There's no evidence that Japanese cult planned attack at park. But search is on for the person behind a videotaped warning.

By H.G. REZA
and RON OSTROW
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

ANAHEIM—Federal law enforcement officials Saturday denied that a Japanese cult had planned to release nerve gas at Disneyland during the crowded Easter weekend and said that a threat received by park officials was a hoax.

Justice Department spokesman Carl Stern said in Washington that the FBI has launched a criminal investigation to determine who is responsible for the phony threat, which prompted worried officials to secretly dispatch a U.S. Army chemical warfare team and scientists to Disneyland.

Disneyland spokesman Tom Brocato said Saturday that the park's security office received a threat on April 13 in a letter and videotape that showed a man wearing rubber gloves and mixing chemicals. Disneyland officials said they immediately notified U.S. authorities, but refused to publicly disclose further details of the incident.

Stern said the anonymous threat implied that a gas

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ORANGE COUNTY

HOAX: Threat to Disneyland Investigated

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attack similar to the one in a Tokyo subway in March could be expected at the Orange County theme park. Tokyo police officials have charged members of a Japanese cult with releasing sarin, a highly toxic nerve agent, in the city's subway, killing 12.

On Saturday, federal law enforcement officials in Southern California and Washington also rejected a published report that two Japanese tourists had been apprehended at Los Angeles International Airport "a few days before Easter" with instructions on how to make sarin.

"A report of the apprehension of two Japanese individuals . . . in connection with the [Disneyland] matter is not correct," Stern said.

Paul West, the Baltimore Sun's Washington bureau chief, said Saturday that the facts in the paper's story are accurate.

The FBI subsequently concluded that the threat was a hoax, but officials initially thought it was serious enough and mobilized a chemical warfare team from the Army's Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland and scientists from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. The specialists were flown cross-country to Disneyland to assess the danger.

"We have an obligation when such threats are received to put federal resources in place whether we believe the threat is real or not," Stern said.

President Clinton and federal officials praised the Army and other U.S. agencies for their coordinated and speedy response to the perceived threat.

"In this instance, local and federal units, including the FBI, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Defense, Public Health Service and others put people and equipment into place with extraordinary speed and coordination," Stern said. "It was a highly successful deployment of resources."

President Clinton said at a press conference Friday that the multi-agency reaction was an example of the government's ability to respond to a terrorist threat. This counterterrorist capability is something "the public does not see—most of which I should not comment on," the President said.

White House officials confirmed Saturday that he was talking about the Disneyland incident.

Investigators said Saturday that the hoax might have been perpetrated by a current or former Disneyland employee. A federal official said investigators are working on this premise because the threat was made against the park's "guests," a term used by the park for its customers, and the letter and videotape were sent to the Disneyland security office.

"A criminal investigation is being conducted by the FBI in an effort to identify and prosecute whoever was responsible," Stern said.

Heightened security at the Happiest Place on Earth was apparent over the Easter weekend. Brocato acknowledged that the park had extra guards on duty and more visitors' bags were checked last weekend than normal, but he denied that the increased security had anything to do with the threat.

Marybeth Jones, a Beverly Hills resident who visited the park April

15, said that "pretty much everyone going through the gate was asked to open their bags." Jones, a Florida native, said she has visited Disney World numerous times but guards there had never checked her bag.

"I was carrying a backpack and the guard asked me to show him

'In this instance, local and federal units . . . put people and equipment into place with extraordinary speed and coordination. It was a highly successful deployment of resources.'

CARL STERN
Justice Department spokesman

the inside of the bag," Jones said. "I didn't think anything of it. I figured it was a normal thing to check for guns or drugs. The guard was very nice and not at all intrusive."

Media reports that Disneyland might have been a terrorist target did not hurt attendance on Saturday, Brocato said. He said the park was "very busy" and attributed the large turnout to the comfortable spring weather.

Coming in the wake of the terrorist bombing in Oklahoma City, the hoax nevertheless raised concern among some Disneyland visitors, but not enough to make them cancel their trips to the park on Saturday.

Kevin Wood, who was visiting Disneyland with his wife and two children from Adelaide, Australia, said he had heard about the scare but went ahead with the family's

plans to visit the park. "You are angry and disappointed. In this world, you come to expect anything. Nothing is a surprise anymore," he said.

Brocato declined to reveal many details about the park's security operation, but insisted that customer safety is a major priority.

"We have this 40-year history here of having the best security there is," Brocato said. "It's of paramount importance to us."

In February, Disneyland officials said there were 382 security personnel responsible for the park's 250 acres—a huge number compared to the 352 sworn Anaheim police officers patrolling the 30,800 acres of the city outside.

The unarmed guards roam the various areas of Disneyland, dressed according to the themes of adjacent rides, Brocato said. Adventureland, with its new Indiana Jones ride, has guards in jungle garb; Tomorrowland, near Space Mountain, brings security forces wrapped in futuristic robes.

Beefing up the security operation is the Anaheim police force, which has no official substation on site but sends officers to the park daily, Brocato said.

Though Disney officials have long been loath to release crime statistics about the park, planning documents released in 1992 for the park's expansion proposal offered a rare glimpse at the situation.

According to those documents, there were 5,292 security-related incidents at Disneyland in 1991, most of them involving theft, vandalism, assault, car theft, shoplifting and trespassing. Police officers were called to the scene 1,084 times.

Times staff writers Jeff Brazil, J.R. Moehring, Jim Newton and Jodi Wilgoren contributed to this report. Brazil and Newton reported from Los Angeles.

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Associated Press Article April 22nd

<https://apnews.com/article/df9ccc6b0a234b65870448e4019574f2>

- Claimed the two men were arrested after arriving in LAX
- Reported that authorities thwarted a plot (per the sun's report)
- FBI Agent stated he had no info about the arrest prior to Easter, but would not confirm or deny a probe.
- Pentagon denied any comment
- Japanese National Police said they could not confirm or deny the report.

Los Angeles Times Initial Article April 22nd

Anti-Terror Agents Feared Gas Attack at Disneyland

(Clippings Below)

Key Points:

- Claimed the tape stated "Guests will die"
- Claims disney received a letter and video tape (unlike baltimore sun report)
- Disneyland in this instance, declined that any foreign nationals were detained.
- Disneyland stated they immediately determined it was a hoax and just decided to follow official guidelines.

Anti-Terror Agents Feared Gas Attack at Disneyland

By MATT LAIT and ERIC MALNIC
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Federal agents rushed to Disneyland over the Easter weekend after threats were received that terrorists planned to launch a lethal gas attack at the park like the one unleashed in the Tokyo subway system last month, sources close to the case said Friday.

Security was intensified during the extended holiday weekend—one of the most popular at the Orange County theme park—but there were no incidents or arrests.

Agents learned of the plot when Disney officials called them to report that the company had received a letter and a videotape warning that something was going

to happen, sources said.

The tape showed a man from the chest down, wearing rubber gloves and apparently mixing chemicals, the source said. The letter or tape threatened that “guests will die.”

An FBI behavioral psychologist in Quantico, Va., analyzed the tape and said he thought the threats were serious, sources said.

Fears of possible calamity like the one that claimed 12 lives in Japan on March 20 prompted federal officials to dispatch special units trained in the confinement, cleanup and disposal of deadly gas to the Anaheim park from the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

The force was said to include

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civilian scientists and physicians from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

Anaheim police officers were issued chemical warfare gear, including gas masks, from stockpiles at the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station.

Security at the park was tightened. Visitors were searched as they passed through the park's gates during Easter weekend. It is one of Disneyland's busiest weekends, featuring Roger Rabbit's Easter Buffet and Scramble and other special attractions.

Investigators said they were concentrating on the possibility that the threats may have come from disgruntled former Disney employees. Pointing to this possibility, the investigators said, was the fact that the threat referred to Disneyland's "guests," a term the park uses for its customers.

In a statement released late Friday night, Disneyland said the park's security office had "received a threat to the safety of our guests and notified federal authorities, who investigated and determined it was a hoax." The park followed federal authorities' advice on taking precautions, the statement said.

Meanwhile Friday, quoting unnamed sources, the Baltimore Sun reported that Tokyo police had said two men associated with the Aum Shinri Kyo cult, blamed for the Tokyo subway attack, had flown to Los Angeles shortly before Easter.

The Sun said both men were arrested upon arrival in Los Angeles, but their present whereabouts were not known.

The FBI discounted much of the Sun story but refused to comment specifically on it. The FBI, the Justice Department and local law enforcement agencies all refused to discuss the case.

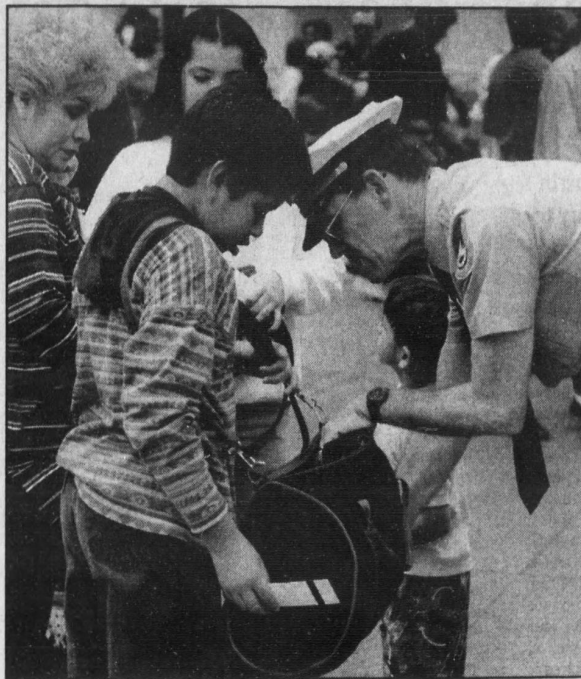
But Disneyland said in its statement that the FBI had not detained "any foreign nationals in reference to this threat."

A Japan National Police Agency official on duty Saturday in Tokyo declined any immediate comment on the reported sharing of information with the FBI or on anything else concerning the two men who were reportedly questioned at Los Angeles International Airport. There was speculation Friday night that President Clinton may have been referring to the Disneyland case during an afternoon news conference in connection with the Oklahoma City bombing.

"There was a recent incident with which I was intimately familiar, which involved a quick and secret deployment of a major United States effort of FBI and FEMA and public health service personnel, because we had a tip of a possible terrorist incident which, thank goodness, did not materialize," Clinton said.

"But we went to the place, and we were ready," the President said, although it could not be confirmed late Friday that he was referring to Disneyland. "We were ready to try to prevent it, and if it occurred, we were ready to respond."

Clinton said the incident was an example of how quickly and well the federal government can respond to threats of terrorism. He said this counterterrorist activity is something "the public does not see, most of which I should not comment on."



GERALDINE WILKINS / Los Angeles Times

A Disney security guard checks a visitor's bag April 14. Federal agents were reportedly at the park after threats of a gas attack.

In Japan, police have arrested more than 100 Aum Shinri Kyo or Supreme Truth sect members suspected in the subway attack. Investigators also have reported finding tons of chemicals, some of which they claimed could be only used to produce sarin, the gas used in the attack. The sect has denied any links to the attack, but officials say they have found traces of sarin

in buildings owned by the cult.

Times staff writers J. Michael Kennedy in Los Angeles, Mark I. Pinsky, Julie Marquis and Ken Ellingwood in Orange County and James Risen in Washington contributed to this story. Lait reported from Anaheim and Mainic from Los Angeles.

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